

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 PC-01 /067 W

-----071550Z 101846 /47

P R 071319Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5145

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

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LONDON FOR SEITZ

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINS, PINT, SL

SUBJ: SIERRA LEONE: ELECTION ROUKD-UP IV, MARCH 31 -

APRIL 6

REF: FREETOWN 1093

1. WITH ELECTION LIKELY WITHIN A MONTH, GENERAL MOOD OF UNCERTAINTY PREVAILS ALONG WITH CONCERN THAT VIOLENCE IS LIKELY. CLOSE CONFIDENT OF PRESIDENT STEVENS, MOST DEFINITELY THE DETERMINING VOICE IN GOSL AND APC ELECTORAL STRATEGY, BELIEVES STEVENS HIMSELF IS UNABLE TO DECIDE WHAT COURSE OF ACTION TO FOLLOW ON MANY DECISIONS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE. THERE THUS MAY BE NO ONE IN THE COUNTRY WHO KNOWS WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF THE POLITICAL SCENE. AS A RESULT, EVERYONE

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IS UNEASY.

2. PRESIDENT STEVENS CONTINUED HIS "MEET-THE-PEOPLE" TOUR WITH VISITS TO PUNJEHUN, MOYAMBA, BO, DARU AND KENEMA WHERE HE PROMISED NEW ROADS, NEW BARRACKS FOR THE ARMY, AND INCREASED SUPPORT FOR FARMERS. STEVENS NOW HAS VISITED ALL TWELVE DISTRICT CAPITALS IN THE THREE PROVINCES AND THE WESTERN AREA,

A TACTICAL PRECONDITION FOR SELECTION OF APC CANDIDATES. AT EACH STOP STEVENS STRESSED THREE THEMES: FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS; LAW AND ORDER; AND, THE APC HAD DONE MORE FOR THE COUNTRY IN ITS NINE YEARS IN OFFICE THAN THE SLPP HAD DONE DURING ITS SEVENTEEN YEARS IN POWER. CHANTS BY SCHOOL CHILDREN OF "SHAKI, SHAKI, TIFI, TIFI" (I.E. STEVENS IS A THIEF) DURING PREVIOUS VISIT TO KABALA CAUSED STEVENS TO TAKE UNUSUAL STEP OF ELIMINATING SCHOOL CHILDREN, TRADITIONALLY LINED IN UNIFORM WAVING FLAGS, FROM ALL PUBLIC GATHERINGS ON THESE TOURS. DURING APRIL 6 VISIT TO KENEMA, SERIOUS FIGHTING BROKE OUT BETWEEN APC AND SLPP SUPPORTERS, VEHICLES BELONGING TO EACH PARTY WERE BURNED, AND SOME PLACES OF BUSINESS CLOSED EARLY; CALM RETURNED APRIL 7.

3. FOLLOWING ON THE HEELS OF DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT ON APRIL 4 (FREETOWN 1122), OPPOSITION SIERRA LEONE PEOPLE'S PARTY (SLPP) ISSUED LENGTHY STATEMENT PROTESTING THE CONTINUATION OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY AND DETENTION OF A NUMBER OF WOULD-BE CANDIDATES, THE MOST PROMINENT OF WHICH CURRENTLY ARE CHIEF YUMKELLA AND FORMER M.P. MANA KPAKA. GOSL HAS USED EXISTENCE OF STATE OF EMERGENCY TO PREVENT MEETINGS OF SLPP WHILE AT SAME TIME ALLOWING APC MEETINGS. OTHER ACTIONS BY GOSL, BOTH IN SIERRA LEONE AND IN LIBERIA, INDICATE IT IS VERY JUMPY ABOUT POSSIBLE RETURN OF FORMER SLPP LEADERS. EARLIER, ON APRIL 2, THE SLPP PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED IT WOULD CONTEST THE ELECTIONS AND PROMISED TO FIELD A "FORMIDABLE FRONT AGAINST THE APC." A SIX MAN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF M. SANUSI MUSTAPHA, S. JUSU-SHERIFF, HAJJ M. M. CONTEH, D.M. YILLAH, AND AUGUSTINE H. DEMBY WAS ANNOUNCED AS THE LEADER-

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SHIP OF THE SLPP.

4. THE FORMATION OF A NEW POLITICAL PARTY, THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL PARTY (DNP), WAS ANNOUNCED IN FREETOWN ON APRIL 5. THE NEW PARTY ALSO DECLARED IT WILL CONTEST THE ELECTIONS. LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT THE COMPOSITION AND GOALS OF THE NEW PARTY AT THIS TIME.

5. DATE FOR ELECTION STILL HAS NOT BEEN PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED. HOWEVER, WELL INFORMED SOURCES SPECULATE THAT NOMINATION DAY, THE DAY ALL CANDIDATES ARE REQUIRED TO FILE THEIR NOMINATIONS, WILL BE WITHIN THE NEXT TEN DAYS. ELECTIONS MUST BE HELD NO EARLIER THAN FIFTEEN AND NO LATER THAN THIRTY DAYS AFTER NOMINATION DAY. SOME SOURCES SAY THE ELECTIONS COULD BE HELD AS EARLY AS APRIL 21. PRESIDENT STEVENS HAS MADE PUBLIC COMMITMENT THAT STATE OF EMERGENCY WOULD BE LIFTED BEFORE ELECTION DAY.

6. THE APC HAS BEEN USING THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION'S MOCK

VOTING BOOTHS, CURRENTLY BEING DISPLAYED AROUND THE COUNTRY, TO CONDUCT POLLS OF THE ELECTORATES' PREFERENCES. THE RESULTS COULD NOT MAKE THE APC VERY HAPPY. ONE SUCH DISPLAY WAS DEMONSTRATED LAST WEEK AT THE "DAILY MAIL" TRADE FAIR IN FREETOWN; THE RESULTS REPORTEDLY SHOWED THAT THE FREETOWN ELECTORATE VOTED OVERWHELMINGLY AGAINST THE APC. THE RESULTS OF A SIMILAR DISPLAY TOURING THE NORTHERN PROVINCE WAS MORE FAVORABLE TO THE APC ACCORDING TO A WELL PLACED APC SYMPATHIZER. HOWEVER, HE CAUTIONED THAT THE APC STILL HAD "PROBLEMS" ELSEWHERE.

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7. ELECTORAL COMMISSION PUBLISHED NOTICE APRIL 6 THAT THERE WERE 2,186,000 REGISTERED VOTERS. THIS FIGURE CLEARLY INFLATED, BUT REASONS FOR INFLATION UNCLEAR. STILL UNPUBLISHED 1974 CENSUS GAVE POPULATION AT ABOUT 3 MILLION. MAKING ROUGH ESTIMATE OF PERCENTAGE OF VOTING POPULATION (21 AND OVER) AS 50 PERCENT, TOTAL POPULATION WOULD HAVE TO BE 4.4 MILLION IN ORDER TO HAVE 2.2 MILLION VOTERS.

8. IN POSSIBLY UNRELATED INCIDENT, OVER WEEKEND APRIL 2/3 FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS RANSACKED, ESPECIALLY OFFICES OF DEPUTY MINISTER HARRY WILLIAMS, PERMSEC COLERIDGE-TAYLOR, DEPSEC WYSE, AND OTHERS. FILING CABINETS WERE RIPPED OPEN AND FILES STREWN ALL OVER. FORNMIN MINAH'S OFFICE WAS UNTOUCHED.

SAMUELS

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